

## Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT, US

SUBJECT: VIEWS OF PAOLO EMILIO TAVIANI ON US POLICY TOWARD  
ITALY

SUMMARY: TAVIANI, ONE OF THE OLD GUARD LEADERS OF THE DC, SHOWS GREAT INTEREST IN ESTABLISHING CONTACT WITH THE USG. HE EXPRESSES OPPOSITION TO HISTORIC COMPROMISE. HE FAVORS EARLY ELECTIONS PRIMARILY TO GIVE NON-COMMUNIST PARTIES ADDITIONAL TIME. HE HOPES AND EXPECTS THAT THE PCI WILL SPLIT AT SOME TIME WITH- IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS. HE BELIEVES THE USG SHOULD ADOPT A NEUTRAL POLICY TOWARD ITALIAN POLITICS AND, AMONG OTHER THINGS, STOP REFUSING VISAS TO PCI OFFICIALS SINCE SUCH REFUSALS IN HIS VIEW ARE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THE PCI WILL LOSE IN CITY ELECTIONS THIS YEAR IN HIS HOME TOWN, GENOA. END SUMMARY.

1. PURSUANT TO VARIANI'S REQUEST TO CONGEN GENOA, POLITICAL COUN- SELOR HAD LONG MEETING JANUARY 30 WITH HIM IN ROME AT OFFICES OF MONTHLY POLITICAL JOURNAL, CIVITAS, WHICH TAVIANI EDITS. TAVIANI IS ONE OF THE OLD GUARD OF THE DC, HAVING HELD VARIOUS MINISTERIAL POSITIONS FROM 1953-74. HE HAS BEEN OUT OF THE GOVERNMENT SINCE 1974 ALTHOUGH STILL VERY MUCH IN CONTROL OF THE LIGURIAN DC AND A POWER (DECLINING) IN THE DOR- OTEO FACTION. IN RECENT YEARS HE HAS ACQUIRED A REPUTATION OF FAVORING A PARLIAMENTARY ACCORD WITH THE COMMUNISTS (PCI).

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2. TAVIANI'S APPARENT PURPOSE IN THE MEETING WAS TO EXPRESS HIS VIEWS ON WHAT HE HOPED US POLICY TOWARD ITALY WOULD BE, AND TO EXPLAIN HIS VIEWS ON THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI). TAVIANI BEGAN BY SAYING THAT HIS HOPES FOR ITALY WERE, HE THOUGHT, MUCH THE SAME AS OUR OWN, THAT IS, A DEMOCRATIC ITALY THAT WILL REMAIN AN INTEGRAL PART OF WESTERN EUROPE AND THE WESTERN WORLD. BUT, HE SAID, HE IS CONCERNED THAT THE TIGHT USG POLICY TOWARD THE PCI IN HINDERING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THIS OBJECTIVE AND HURRYING THE DAY IN WHICH THE PCI WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT. THE PCI CANNOT, HE SAID, SUCCESSFULLY USE USG CONTACTS FOR ITS OWN DOMESTIC POLITICAL ADVANTAGE. THE PCI MAY ATTEMPT TO DO SO (AS IT HAS IN THE PAST) BUT SUCH EFFORTS WILL BACKFIRE, PARTICULARLY WITH THE YOUNG, WHO ARE THE SWING VOTERS IN ITALY, BECAUSE IT WILL SHOW THEM THAT THE PCI IS NOT WHAT IT HAS CLAIMED TO BE ALL THESE YEARS BUT INSTEAD IS SIMPLY ANOTHER POWER-HUNGRY PARTY ANXIOUS FOR APPROVAL FROM THE COUNTRY THAT IT HAS PAINTED AS THE ARCH-ENEMY. AS A RESULT, HE SAID, THE YOUNG WILL BEGIN QUESTION AND MOVE AWAY FROM THE PCI. TAVIANI CONCLUDED THIS ARGUMENT BY SAYING THAT HE WAS NOT SUGGESTING THAT THE USG SUDDENLY EMBRACE THE PCI, BUT INSTEAD THAT THE USG REMAIN NEUTRAL TOWARD ITALIAN POLITICS AND PARTIES. ACCORDINGLY, FOR EXAMPLE, HE BELIEVES THAT THE USG SHOULD GIVE A VISA TO A PCI OFFICIAL IF HE HAS A LEGITIMATE REASON FOR GOING TO THE US AND NOT DENY THE VISA ONLY BECAUSE HE IS A PCI OFFICIAL.

3. IN RESPONSE TO THE FOREGOING, THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR DESCRIBED OUR VISA POLICY AND THE REQUIREMENTS OF US LAW. HE ALSO INDICATED OUR CONCERN THAT ANY OTHER THAN OUR PRESENT POLICY TOWARD THE PCI COULD DISCOURAGE MANY NON-COMMUNIST ITALIANS AND CONVINCE THEM THAT THE COMING TO POWER OF THE PCI IS INEVITABLE. HE ALSO DESCRIBED THE STRONG AND POSITIVE RESPONSE THAT THE MISSION CONTINUES TO GET THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY TO THE SECRETARY'S PUBLIC REMARKS ON POLICY TOWARD THE PCI AND TO THE AMBASSADOR'S EPOCA INTERVIEW ON THE SAME SUBJECT. IN RESPONSE TO THIS LONG DESCRIPTION OF THE REASONS FOR OUR CONVICTION THAT A DIFFERENT US POLICY WOULD BE A POSITIVE HELP TO THE PCI, TAVIANI AGAIN COMMENTED THAT OUR ANALYSIS IS WRONG AND THAT, IF WE CARE ABOUT DEMOCRACY IN ITALY, THE BEST THING WE CAN DO IS ADOPT A COMPLETELY NEUTRAL ATTITUDE TOWARD ITALIAN POLITICAL PARTIES

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AND DEVELOPMENTS.

4. WHEN THE CONVERSATION TURNED TO THE CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION, TAVIANI QUICKLY EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT EARLY ELECTIONS ARE HIGHLY DESIRABLE. THE LONGER THEY ARE PUT OFF, HE SAID, THE MORE THE PCI WILL GAIN. IN HIS VIEW THE DC SHOULD SEEK EARLY ELECTIONS WITH THE IDEA OF PUTTING TOGETHER A GOVERNMENT WITH THE SOCIALISTS (AND OTHERS IF POSSIBLE) IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ELECTIONS.

ONLY BY TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE FIVE YEARS OF "BREATHING SPACE" THAT A NEW LEGISLATURE WOULD PROVIDE IS THERE ANY LONG TERM HOPE, IN TAVIANI'S VIEW, OF KEEPING THE COMMUNISTS OUT OF THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT. WHEN ASKED TO EXPAND ON THIS THOUGHT, TAVIANI SAID THAT THERE ARE MANY INTERNAL CONFLICTS AND CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN THE PCI, AT ALL LEVELS OF THE PARTY. THESE CONFLICTS AND CONTRADICTIONS ARE OF SEVERAL SORTS, BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY THEY INCLUDE SHARP DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THOSE WHO ARE TIED TO MOSCOW AND LIKE SOVIET-STYLE COMMUNISM AND THOSE WHO ARE WESTERN-ORIENTED AND ARE MOVING TOWARD SOCIAL DEMOCRACY. HE THINKS THAT, GIVEN TIME, THESE CONTRADICTIONS WILL EXPLODE AND SPLIT THE PCI IN TWO. HE THINKS THAT THERE IS SOME CHANCE THAT THIS WILL HAPPEN WITHIN FIVE YEARS, BUT ALSO HOPES THAT SOME PRESENTLY UNFORESEEABLE EVENT (E.G., SOVIET INTERVENTION IN POST-TITO YUGOSLAVIA, A USSR-CHINA WAR, SOVIET MOVES IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN OR THE MIDDLE EAST) WILL HAPPEN TO PRECIPITATE THE PRESENTLY SUBSURFACE CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN THE PCI. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE EXPRESSED OPPOSITION TO THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE BUT THOUGHT THAT DC-PCI COOPERATION IN SMALL TOWNS (UNDER 10,000) COULD HELP IN PRECIPITATING THE INFORMAL CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN THE PCI.

5. WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE CITY ELECTIONS IN GENOA SCHEDULED FOR THIS JUNE, TAVIANI SAID THAT IF THEY ARE HELD (EARLY NATIONAL ELECTIONS WOULD CANCEL THEM), THE PCI WILL HOLD ITS PRESENT DOMINANT POSITION. HE DOES NOT THINK THAT THE DC WILL GO BELOW THE LOW LEVEL OF LAST JUNE 15 IN THE PROVINCE OF GENOA, BUT ALSO DOES NOT THINK THAT THERE IS ANY CHANCE OF THE PCI LOSING (IN COMPARISON TO ITS STRONG GAINS IN THE JUNE 15, 1975 GENOA PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS).

6. TAVIANI WAS VERY NEGATIVE ON THE PROSPECTS FOR RENEWAL OF THE DC IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. RENEWAL IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE, HE SAID, AS LONG AS THE DC IS THE MAJOR GOVERNMENT COALITION

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PARTNER. REAL RENEWAL IS ONLY LIKELY TO OCCUR WHEN THE DC GOES INTO THE OPPOSITION, AND THAT CAN ONLY OCCUR (ON GOOD TERMS) IF HIS HOPED-FOR SPLIT IN THE PCI OCCURS AND A SUBSTANTIAL PART OF IT (OR ITS ELECTORATE) MOVES TO THE DEMOCRATIC SIDE OF THE LEDGER. FOR THE DC TO BE ABLE TO GO INTO OPPOSITION IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD, HE SAID, BE THE BEST THING THAT COULD HAPPEN FOR THE DC AND FOR ITALIAN DEMOCRACY.

7. COMMENT: THE CONCERN TAVIANI EXPRESSED ABOUT THE PCI IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE REPUTATION HE HAS ACQUIRED IN RECENT YEARS AS THE ONLY ONE OF THE OLD DC LEADERS WHO MORE OR LESS OPENLY FAVORED COOPERATION WITH THE PCI. BOTH FROM THIS CONVERSATION AND HIS EARLIER ONES WITH CONGEN GENOA, IT IS CLEAR THAT TAVIANI IS MAKING AN EFFORT TO PERSUADE THE USG OF HIS OPPOSITION TO THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE AND HIS FEAR OF COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION

IN A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT.

8. IT IS DIFFICULT TO EVALUATE WHAT TAVIANI SAYS OR HIS SINCERITY IN SAYING IT. HE IS CLEARLY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE OF ITALY AND ABOUT THE ABILITY OF NON-COMMUNIST ITALIANS TO TURN THE TIDE WITHOUT THE BENEFIT OF SOME UNFORESEEABLE EXTERNAL EVENT THAT WILL PRECIPITATE A CONVULSION WITHIN THE PCI. IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT HE IS STRESSING HIS FEAR OF THE PCI TO MAKE MORE CREDIBLE HIS URGING OF A CHANGE IN US POLICY.

9. AT THE END OF THE CONVERSATION REPORTED ABOVE, TAVIANI SAID THAT HE WISHED HIS CONTACTS WITH THE EMBASSY TO CONTINUE. SINCE HE REMAINS AN IMPORTANT (ALTHOUGH DECLINING) FIGURE IN THE DC, WE WILL MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH HIM DESPITE THE OBVIOUS DIVERGENCE BETWEEN HIS VIEWS AND OURS.

10. TAVIANI IS ANYTHING BUT A RETIRED "OLD MAN", AS SOME HAVE PICTURED HIM. HE IS 63, APPEARS TO BE IN EXCELLENT HEALTH AND FULL OF ENERGY AND VIGOR. HE IS OBVIOUSLY WELL-INFORMED AND GREATLY INTERESTED IN THE CURRENT POLITICAL SCENE, BUT SHOWED NO INTEREST IN OR ANTICIPATION OF PLAYING A LEADING ROLE AT THE PRESENT OR IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. FROM HIS COMMENTS, IT IS CLEAR THAT HE INTENDS TO REMAIN ACTIVE IN THE DC PARTY IN LIGURIA. VOLPE

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